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DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EUR/SE, EUR/PD, NEA/PD, DRL  
JCS PASS J-5/CDR S. WRIGHT

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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2007

In Today's Papers

**Basbug: Turkey in Process of Implementing Cross Border Operation**  
All papers report Turkish Land Forces Commander General Ilker Basbug's comments that Turkey is "in the process of implementing" a cross-border operation against the PKK in northern Iraq, but "when or how" it will be implemented is "another issue." Basbug said the Turkish military has been doing cross-border incursions for years and it has been successful so far. "It is wrong to think that terrorism will be eliminated with a cross-border operation, but it is also wrong to think that such an operation will not yield results," Basbug emphasized. General Basbug also appealed to the Turkish press to "leave the decision-makers in peace during this process."

**Erdogan Opposes Lifting Kurdish DTP's Immunity**

All papers report Prime Minister Erdogan statements that his party will not support the MHP motion to lift the parliamentary immunity of the pro-Kurdish DTP deputies so that they can be prosecuted. "If they find themselves outside the parliament, we would be sending them to the mountains," Erdogan stressed. The PM also called on the DTP to choose democracy over armed struggle.

**'Jerusalem Meeting' in Istanbul Demands Liberation of Palestine**  
Milliyet, Sabah, Radikal, Cumhuriyet, Zaman and others report on the Jerusalem Meeting in Istanbul, which was organized by Islamist-oriented Turkish NGOs and attended by 3000 members of radical Islamist groups from 60 countries. The members of the conference condemned Israel and called for the liberation of Palestine. Representatives of Hamas, al-Fatah and the Jerusalem Movement took part in the meeting. Reportedly, the participants said that the Annapolis meeting to be held in the US was designed to liquidate the Palestinian state.

**Armenian Daily: Turkey Partially Closes Air Corridor for Armenian Flights**

Mainstream Milliyet reports the Armenian daily Azg claims Turkey has partially closed its air corridor for Armenian flights between

Yerevan and Aleppo and Beirut. Armenian Airlines "Armavia" said Turkey did not provide specifics other than "technical reasons" for the closure. The Armenian Civic Aviation Institution said Turkey did not close its airspace, and that flights from Yerevan to Istanbul and other European cities continue. Azg writes that the partial closure is Ankara's response to the developments concerning efforts for international recognition of the alleged genocide against Armenians in Ottoman Turkey in 1915. Milliyet says if the reports of closure are correct, it would mean the first serious Turkish sanction against Armenia.

Gul to Pakistan to Meet Musharraf, Bhutto  
Mainstream Hurriyet reports that President Abdullah Gul plans to travel to Islamabad next month to meet President Pervez Musharraf, opposition leader Benazir Bhutto and other opposition representatives in an effort to help resolve the political crisis in Pakistan. A Turkish Foreign Ministry (MFA) source said the date for the visit has not been fixed yet. The US Administration has welcomed Turkish efforts for defusing political tensions in Pakistan, according to Hurriyet.

Editorial Opinion on Annapolis Summit, the PKK  
Ferai Tinc commented in mainstream Hurriyet (11/16): "The Ankara Forum prompted international expectations to rise for Turkey's ability as a peacemaker. To a certain extent, Turkey is fulfilling these expectations. Because of its policies of good relations with its neighbors, Turkey is often called upon by regional actors for assistance. Secretary Rice reiterated the importance of international support for success at the Annapolis conference, highlighting the importance of Turkey's role. Next week, the invitee list will be announced and it is very possible that Turkey will be included. The agenda of the meeting is not clear yet, but

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foreign ministers of the EU Countries will discuss the issue on Monday. The Annapolis Conference is like a knife's edge. Maybe this is the last chance for moderate politics to win against radicalism. If this conference is not successful, then there will be no future either for the West Bank or for Mahmoud Abbas. The sounds of war supporters will be heard from everywhere."

Bilal Cetin commented in the mainstream Vatan (11/16): "Following the Bush-Erdogan meeting on November 5, no details were disclosed other than President Bush declaring that PKK an enemy of the US and that to eliminate the PKK, intelligence will be shared. Before he left for Prague, PM Erdogan told journalists that 'there is no possibility of a cross-border operation at the moment. Our priority is for the weapons to be laid down'. These remarks explain that, following his meeting with Bush, Erdogan is waiting for the PKK to lay down its arms. This means the US doesn't support Turkey's CBO into northern Iraq, but rather wants improved relations between Turkey and the northern Iraqi Administration. At the same time, the US is aware that if terrorist activities continue, a CBO is inevitable. That is why it favors a formula that doesn't require a cross border operation. The PKK should be forced to disarm and Kurdish leaders Barzani and Talabani must support this effort. Currently, Peshmerge units are intensifying their activities along the border and the PKK is under intense pressure to disarm. Turks want Kurds to understand that if the PKK does not disarm, the US and the Iraqi Administrations will support a cross border operation.. Therefore, the reason for postponing any operation is to give the US and Kurdish Regional Authority time to disarm the PKK."

TV Highlights  
NTV, 7.00 A.M.

#### Domestic News

- Prime Minister Erdogan will visit Azerbaijan on November 16-17 to participate in the 11th "Friendship, Brotherhood and Cooperation Assembly of Turkish States and Communities."

- The Turkish Parliament's human rights commission is to look into the complaints filed by gypsies who have been displaced from their homes in Istanbul's Sulukule neighborhood.

- Transport Minister Binali Yildirim said that a third bridge over the Bosphorus in Istanbul will be constructed in the north of the city.
- State Minister Mehmet Simsek said the Turkish lira was too strong, but adds that the government will not meddle in Central Bank decisions.

#### International News

- State Department Spokesman Sean McCormack said the US will be counting on Turkey's political diplomatic and economic support to "help Israel and Palestine move forward on the two-state solution track."
- The International Atomic Energy Agency said in a report Iran has become more transparent in its nuclear activities, but that it is providing "diminishing" information about its nuclear program.
- Russia has completed the withdrawal of soldiers based in Georgia since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.
- Russia has been convicted by the European Court of Human Rights in three suits related to execution without trial, missing persons and property rights in Chechnya.

WILSON